morgan black
ID/entity

He, She, Them

Informed by the cultural 'typing' photography of Francis Galton and Alphonse Bertillon in the late 19th Century, this work seeks to question the validity of such notions of gender, class and personality being allegedly inherent in human physiognomy - assumptions which are still current today, and remain the basis of intolerance, division, and misunderstanding across the world. As a non-binary individual, the artist/model Morgan Black hopes to present their face in both masculine (bearded) and feminine (smooth, with full make-up) appearance, and ask: what exactly defines a 'feminine' profile, a 'male' jaw? What denotes a female hairstyle?

The artist and his female persona are blended into a single composite work utilizing multiple individual 'mug shot' portraits which proceed from bearded male, to clean shaven, to increasing layers of feminine make-up and varied head coverings (natural long hair and beanie hat, to various contrasting styles of wig). By subtly varying facial expression and attitude between shots the artist hopes to 'blend' all possibilities into a single unified entity (which may appear "more respectable" than any of the individual portraits, as Galton himself noted in his own composites), and present a unification of gendered opposites with reference to Jungian individuation and alchemical transformation.

Equipment: digital Panasonic Lumix DMC-TZ6 with a Leica 25-300mm lens, Adobe Photoshop.

Photography by Annelisa Davis.

Fonda

A direct reference and response to the famous Jane Fonda police mugshot of 1970, in which she presented a raised fist in defiance at the situation which led to her arrest following an anti-Vietnam war demonstration. As a non-binary individual, the artist/performer Morgan Black seeks to invoke the spirit of that era of protest in an increasingly divided and divisive world, wherein new battles for civil rights are having to be fought on a daily basis. By adopting this pose, the artist directly addresses the growing issues of transgender rights and gender-conformity.

Equipment: analogue Asahi Pentax Spotmatic with a Super Takumar 55mm lens (1964) and Ilford HP5 Plus 400 35mm black and white film. This camera and film produces a 'grainy' and '1970's feel', depicting the model in a sincere and visceral manner. The shadows of the white but overly painted uneven walls create a stark sense of ominous reality.

Photography by Annelisa Davis

Face to ecaF

The two personae of the non-binary model come face to face with each other, in an alternative, digital world where oneself and one's alternative persona are able to meet in a paradoxical dialogue, visualising Sartre's state of self-consciousness which appears, and also appears to itself. The 'Othering' of the self is a concept the artist has previously explored, with reference not just to the conflicting inner feelings between the two personae, but also the effects upon others, channelled through the Sartrian notions of "the Look" and the state of "Being-for-Others". The dialogue is thus extended to the third-party viewer of the work, who will query the subject/s from their own ontological position.

Equipment: digital Panasonic Lumix DMC-TZ6 with a Leica 25-300mm lens and Adobe Photoshop.

Photography by Annelisa Davis